

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-12
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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7032
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
USLO RIYADH
USIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SOPN, PEPR, SY, US
SUBJECT: TISHRIIN EDITORIALIZES ON SYRIA'S REFUSAL TO RECEIVE
ATHERTON

REF: DAMASCUS 1132

1. IN FOLLOW-UP TO YESTERDAY'S "SCOOP" ABOUT SYRIA'S REFUSAL
TO RECEIVE ATHERTON, TISHRIIN LEAD EDITORIAL SETS FORTH
SYRIA'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS CURRENT PEACE EFFORTS. ENTITLED:
"HAS SYRIA CLOSED THE DOOR FOR DIALOGUE?", EDITORIAL ASSERTS
THAT SYRIA'S REFUSAL TO RECEIVE ATHERTON IS JUSTIFIED
SINCE THE MISSION WHICH HE IS UNDERTAKING IS AIMED AGAINST
SYRIA. IT GOES ON TO ASSERT THAT SYRIA IS OPEN TO ANY
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SINCERE ENDEAVOR TO PROMOTE A GENUINE PEACE ON THE
BASIS OF UN RESOLUTIONS (UNSPECIFIED). IT, HOWEVER,
NOTES THAT SYRIA "STRONGLY REJECTS AN ATTEMPT FROM
ANY PARTY TO DEFLECT INTERNATIONAL PEACE EFFORTS
SO THAT SUCH PEACE EFFORTS BECOME A COVER FOR SUSPECT
ENDEAVORS FILLED WITH PLOTS AND INTRIGUES..." TO SPLIT THE ARABS.

2. ON MORE POSITIVE NOTE, EDITORIAL AFFIRMS THAT SYRIA SEEKS A JUST AND LASTING PEACE AND CONTINUES READY TO COOPERATE WITH ANY PARTY THAT WISHES TO HELP. IT WARNS THAT SYRIA WILL NOT ACCEPT BEING TREATED AS THOUGH IT IS OPERATING FROM A POSITION OF WEAKNESS. IT PROCLAIMS THAT SYRIA HAS MADE MANY SACRIFICES AND WILL CONTINUE TO SACRIFICE TO MAINTAIN THE INDEPENDENCE OF ITS DECISION-MAKING PROCESS. IT AGAIN AFFIRMS SYRIA'S DESIRE TO "ESTABLISH A STRATEGIC BALANCE" WITH ISRAEL.

3. EDITORIAL CONCLUDES BY NOTING THAT SYRIA BASES ITS RELATIONS WITH OTHER STATES ON A COMBINATION OF ISSUES FOREMOST OF WHICH ARE:

--FULL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM ALL OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

--RECOGNITION OF THE PALESTINIAN RIGHT TO ESTABLISH AN INDEPENDENT STATE OVER ITS LAND AND RECOGNITION OF THE PLO AS A REPRESENTATIVE (COMMENT: NOT THE "SOLE" REPRESENTATIVE) OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

--RESPECT FOR THE SOVEREIGNTY, INDEPENDENCE, AND INVIOABILITY OF THE TERRITORY OF ARAB STATES.

4. COMMENT: WE SPECULATE THAT THIS SECOND DAY OF PRESS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ATTENTION TO SYRIA'S REFUSAL OF ATHERTON VISIT MAY REFLECT IN PART SYRIAN UNCERTAINTY WHETHER IT HAS BEEN ADEQUATELY PROJECTING DESIRED IMAGE OF "STEADFASTNESS" AND EFFORT TO REASSURE THEIR ALLIES THAT SYRIA UNDER NO CONDITION WILL ENTER INTO THE CURRENT FRAMEWORK OF NEGOTIATIONS. WE PREDICT COMMENTARIES ON WHY SYRIA REFUSED ATHERTON VISIT WILL SOON FADE FROM MEDIA.
MURPHY

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